

# Vocabulary Knowledge Rating

## Description

Vocabulary Knowledge Rating is a strategy for assessing students' familiarity with important terms in a reading selection by having them independently rate how well they know these terms. This preassessment enables you to get a realistic gauge of students' expressive and receptive vocabulary knowledge—that is, words they actually understand versus words they simply recognize. You are then able to provide focused and substantive preteaching as necessary.

## Steps

1. List the Vocabulary Builder words and expressive vocabulary for a given selection on a Vocabulary Knowledge Rating Chart and distribute copies of it. When students have the list, tell them that they will prepare for reading the new selection by assessing what they already know about important vocabulary in it.
2. Pronounce each word as students complete the knowledge-rating process so that decoding is not a problem. As you read each word aloud, ask students to rate their word knowledge by checking one of the columns on the chart:

1 = Know it: I know this word well (can define it and use it in an intelligent sentence).

2 = Kind of know it: I have heard or seen this word (but not sure what it means).

3 = Do not know it: I have not seen or heard the word before.

Remind students not to indicate that they *know* a word (Rating 1) if they simply *recognize* a word (Rating 2). Also encourage them not to hesitate to indicate that they do not recognize or understand a word at all (Rating 3). Invite them to be honest, as you will use their input to decide what words you will preteach and discuss.

3. Use the ratings for a unified-class discussion. Tally how many students actually know (or think they know) each word and encourage them to share their knowledge. In this way, you will be able to gauge just how much prereading instruction you need to provide. Follow up this assessment and brainstorming process with focused instruction of terms that are totally unfamiliar, somewhat familiar, or clearly misunderstood.
4. Draw students' attention to the Vocabulary Builder notations in the side columns of their textbook. Point out that the words are placed to provide them with a meaning in the context of the reading. They should apply the meanings as they read.
5. After you have completed instruction and students have read the assigned selection, have them return to their Vocabulary Knowledge Rating Charts and re-rate themselves. Then, return to the selection or use reference books to clarify words that are still problematic.
6. Let students know that this Vocabulary Knowledge Rating Chart is an organizer for study. Any words on the list may appear on the Selection Test. Students should also be held accountable for using these terms in related oral or written work.

## Source

Blachowicz, C., and Fisher, P.J. (2002). *Teaching Vocabulary in All Classrooms*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

## General Resources

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